

UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE  
*Special Lecture Series—31*

# KASHMIRI LITERATURE

(THREE SPECIAL LECTURES)

PROF. J. L. KAUL



PRASĀRĀNGA  
UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE  
MYSORE  
1970



MOTILAL BANARSIDASS  
Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar,  
P. B. 1586 DELHI-7

UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE  
Special Lecture Series-31  
*First published 1970*

PK

7031

K21

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Price Rs. 3 <sup>net</sup> Indian Edition  
\$ 2 (Inclusive of postage)  
sh 15 „

103  
MVA

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR  
PRASARANGA, MANASAGANGOTRI, MYSORE 6

PRINTED AT THE WESLEY PRESS, MYSORE

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are extremely happy to present 'Kashmiri Literature' by Prof. J. L. Kaul to the public in the present form.

We are under a deep debt of gratitude to Prof. J. L. Kaul who kindly accepted our invitation to deliver a course of three talks on the subject and permitted us to publish them in this form.

We are grateful to M/s. Wesley Press for their exquisite printing.

PRABHUSHANKARA

*Director*



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## KASHMIRI POETRY:

### *Main Themes and Forms*

I am conscious of the honour you have done me in inviting me to deliver these lectures; and I am grateful. I am grateful also because I consider this invitation a recognition, not always shown, to what are thought of as the periphery languages of India, and therefore not prestigious. I am happy at this gesture of goodwill from one of the Southern-most states to the Northern-most State of this vast country and, numerically and qualitatively, from one of the big and more advanced to the smallest (sindhi excepted) and not so advanced a Modern Indian Language recognized by the Constitution. What is more, to me this recognition and gesture of goodwill are a sure sign of your large-heartedness as well as determination to forge bonds of understanding to further the cause of emotional understanding which, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru (A.I.C.C. Hyderabad, 1958) is 'even more important and urgent than the Five Year Plans'. May I thank you and respectfully compliment you.

## 2

Kashmiri is the language of the people of Kashmir Province, that is, the Valley of Kashmir, of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris call their land 'Kashi:' and their language 'Koshur' or 'Ka': shur'. The language area is bounded on the north by the Shinna languages of the Dard Group of the Dardic sub-family; on the east by Bodhi, the language of the Buddhists of Ladakh; on the South by Dogri and Pahari; and on the west by Pahari and western Punjabi. It has one true dialect, Kashtawari,

which prevails in Kashtwar to the south-east of the Valley across the Paantsaal (Pir Panchal) range on the upper reaches of the Chenab. The census Report of 1961 records the number of the speakers of Kashmiri as 1,959,115. This does not include the speakers of the language in the parts of Kashmir under occupation of Pakistan after the Raid of 1947.

The place of Kashmiri in the Indian linguistic context has not yet been definitively determined. There is a group of scholars who consider Kashmiri an Indo-Aryan language like Punjabi or Hindi, while some others place it under the Dardic branch of Indo-Aryan. These latter claim that the Aryan branch of Indo-European comprises three groups, viz., Indo-Aryan, Iranian and Dardic. Grierson has argued that 'Kashmiri is a mixed language, having as its basis a language of the Dard group of the Pisacha family allied to Shinna. It has been powerfully influenced by Indian culture and literature, and the greater part of its vocabulary is now of Indian origin and is allied to that of the Sanskritic Indo-Aryan languages of northern India. As, however, its basis—in other words, its phonetic system, its accidence, its syntax, its prosody—is Pisacha, it must be classed as such, and not as a Sanskritic form of speech'. (Linguistic Survey of India, VIII, Part II). Suniti Kumar Chatterji seems to agree with this view. 'As a language', says he, 'Kashmiri, at least in its basic stratum, belongs to the Dardic Section of Aryan or Indo-Iranian. Nor has the affiliation of the Dardic branch itself been yet finally determined. Grierson, for instance, is of the opinion that the Dardic languages form a special branch of the Indo-Iranian while Morgenstierne holds that they are Indo-Aryan.' It may also be of interest to say that according to Kashmir mythology, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Valley, even



before the arrival of the Pisachas, were the Nagas after whom every mountain spring is named a 'naag'.

Be that as it may, it is significant to note that Kashmiri possesses features peculiar to itself which mark it off from the Indo-Aryan languages. For instance: there are no sonant (voiced) aspirates (घ, झ, ढ, ध, भ) in Kashmiri; a marked feature of Kashmiri is 'consonantal epenthesis', that is, the change in a consonant under the influence of a vowel or semi-vowel e.g., *thok*, *tha'c*; the usual word order in Kashmiri is, as in English, subject-verb-object; every final surd consonant is aspirated in Kashmiri, e.g., *raat* (night) is pronounced *raath*; the numeral system is typically Pisacha; Kashmiri possesses the unusual voiceless affricate *ts* (च), its aspirated *tsh* (छ) and the voiced fricative *z* (ज); not to mention *matra* vowels inaudible to non-Kashmiri ears, it has several vowel phonemes peculiar to it viz.,

a', a'r (in good condition), a': or aa', a':r (a plum);  
u', tu'r (a piece of rag); u':, or uu', tu':r (cold);  
o', o'n (blind) so'n (deep)—a short ओ *o* sound;  
e', tre' (three), me' (to me), she'ch (news)—a short  
ॢ, *e*, sound; and

wa, ö, *dwad*, *död* (milk); *sway*, *söy* (nettle), a diphthongization.

What is pertinent to say here is that while Kashmiri has, as its substratum, the shinna or Dardic, it was, long ago, profoundly affected by the Indo-Aryan 'spoken' Sanskrit and, consequently, Prakrits and Apabhramsa. For over two thousand years Kashmir has been a part of 'the Sanskritic culture-world' of India; and its contribution to Sanskrit and, later, to Buddhist Mahayana learning has been significant. It has been the home of Saivism (The Trika Monistic philosophy), which, in



certain features, is different from, what may be called, Shankara Vedanta. But we must also remember that, by about the 14th—15th centuries after Christ, another influence came on Kashmiri. This time it was Perso-Arabic which, by the 18th century, overlay the language, and now replaces many words and constructions not only of the Dardic but of Sanskrit origin; and, what is more, continues to provide to it the poetic forms, allusions and even figures of speech. Modern Kashmiri has abandoned Indian metres, and the metres used are all Iranian; and what may be called the heroic metre of the language, employed even in Hindu epics like *Ramavatacarita*, is the well-known Persian metre called 'bahr-i-Hazaj'.

Muslim rule came to Kashmir through a palace *coup de etat* when Dulcha (or Zulcha) invaded the country and the Raja fled to Kishtawar and Bhatta Rinchan, a Dard Buddhist, a soldier of fortune and a refugee, ascended the throne as Sadr-ud-din (1320-23) with Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, as his Vazir. It was, however, in 1339 that, after the death of Udyandeva (1323-38), Shah Mir deposed Kota Rani and ascended the throne as Shams-ud-din Shah Mir and founded the pre-Mughal Sultanate which lasted 247 years (including the rule of the Chak Dynasty from 1555 to 1586) till Akbar conquered Kashmir. Though Sanskrit continued to be used for legal and state documents for a little longer, the classical Sanskrit tradition of the Hindu period began to lose its overpowering hold on the people, its patronage as well as prestige; and Hindu society could no longer hold in check the process of disintegration under the challenge of Islam after the Muslim kings came to the throne. Patronage and prestige came now to be attached to Persian, the new court language. It was about this time when the old literary tradition had lost its hold on

society and the new had not yet gained it, that poetry found expression in the language of the people.

### 3

Perhaps I have strayed from the subject proper. My apology is that somewhat of the relevant linguistic and socio-political background is necessary to facilitate comprehension. My purpose in selecting the subject, 'Kashmiri Poetry: Main Themes and Forms', is to give a general idea of Kashmiri poetry down the centuries without encumbering the paper with details unavoidable in a historical survey, however brief. For Kashmiri, and I daresay, for other literatures also, it is possible to discern the dominance of certain literary art-forms at certain periods so that, broadly speaking, one may designate an age of literature not only by the name of a prominent creative genius, a poet, a novelist, a dramatist, but also, alternatively, by the dominant literary art-form itself. We must, however, remember that it is the dominant, but not the only, literary art-form of the period, and that form and theme or content cannot be separated. They are the concave and convex of the mirror.

The dominant poetic art-form of the first literary period (1300 c. to 1555 A.D.) is, what we call, the *Vaakh* (Sans. *Vakya*). A *Vaakh* is a 4-line stanza, complete and independent in itself, with a variety of rhyme-schemes, *abab*, *abac*, *abcb*, or no rhyme at all. The metre is qualitative, a loose stress accent, four accents to the line generally, and not a strict short-and-long quantity measure. It is, obviously, a compact, aphoristic, a sententious gnomic, verse, a fit and adequate expression for a mystical insight or a didactic exhortation. Fortunately, the work of three poets has come down to us more or less intact. We have Shiti Kantha's *Mahanaya Prakasha*, Lal Ded's *Vaakh* and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din's *Shrukh*



(Sans. Sloka). *Mahanaya Prakasha* has 94 verses, each a 4-line stanza, and deals with the practises of esoteric schools of the time. It has, for us, more linguistic and prosodic interest than literary, but it is perhaps well worth quoting a stanza to show, as has been noted by Grierson, how the prakrit, in the Apabhramsa stage, had merged into the language that finally became the Kashmiri of the present day.

इतय ओवल्लीन परम्पर  
दीपमाला ज्ञान अन्धकार  
धमित धाम उद्धयेत निरन्तर  
दिपूपूपायवतु अविकार

Most words are Sanskritic but we find here a Persian word also used, the word: *o:valli:n*, which is the same as 'avliya' (saints).

Had *Mahanaya Prakasha* been all that was there, Kashmiri poetry should have died with Shiti Kantha. Sanskrit had successfully blocked Kashmiri for a thousand years and Persian should have suppressed it for another five centuries had Lal Ded not come upon the scene. After her, it was no longer possible even for Perso-Arabic to suppress Kashmiri, for Lal Ded's *Vaakh* spread like wild fire and caught on; and people throughout the countryside accepted her and were stirred to their depths. She was a remarkable woman, a Saiva Yogini, eclectic in her sayings, even critical of orthodoxy, its dogma and ritual. It is not, however the abstruse philosophy nor the spiritual disciplines, albeit in people's own language, that made her the poet-saint of the people, beloved of them, whether Hindu or Muslim, scholar or peasant, and has continued to be so till the present day. It is rather her intense spiritual quest, the stamp of genuine mystic experience, the authenticity of her poetic expression, its



energy of idiom and terse homely imagery, racy of the soil, that have given her verse-saying a lasting eminence both in the people's affection and in the literature of Kashmiri. Her *Vaakh* have become current coin in the speech of today, retaining freshness of appeal.

'aami pana so'dras naavi chas lamaan  
kati bozi day myon me'ti diyi taar  
aamyān taakyan pony chas shamaan  
zuv chum bramaan gara gatsha haa'

'naabu'dy baaras atu'gand dyo'l gom  
dihī kaad ho'l gom hyaka ka'hyu:  
gwarasund vanun raavan tyo'l pyom  
pahaliro'st khyo'l gom hyaka ka'yu.'

To illustrate, however clumsily, in translation:

1. With unspun thread I tow my boat, and pray:  
'Would God heard my prayer and brought me safe  
Across'. Like water in cups of clay I waste  
And long to reach my home.
2. My candy load (of worldly pleasures), its sling  
Gone loose, galls my back and bends my body  
Under its weight. My Guru's word (that I  
Must lose the world to gain my Self) has been  
A painful blister of loss to me. My flock  
Is shepherdless and gone astray, ah me!
3. The steed of mind speeds over the sky, and in  
The twinkling of the eye, a hundred thousand  
Leagues traverses he. The man of true  
Intelligence reins in the curvetting steed,  
And on the wheels of *Prana* and *Apana*,  
His chariot guides aright.

4. Searching and seeking Him, I, Lalla, wearied myself,  
And even beyond my strength I strove.  
Looking for Him, I found His doors bolted and  
barred—

This deepened my longing and stiffened my resolve:  
I would not move but stood where I was, firm  
And full of longing and love, to gaze on Him.

5. Who slays the highway robbers three,  
Desire, Lust and Pride;  
Who, in meekness and loving kindness,  
Makes himself the servant of all—  
It is he that truly seeks the Lord;  
All else as worthless ashes he regards.

6. Mastering my vital airs, I cut my way  
Through Forests Six; and the Digit of the Moon  
Awoke for me, freezing the active Prakriti.  
In the fire of love I roasted my heart.  
Thus I came to where I found my God.

7. In my inmost heart I searched  
For the mystic Moon; and lo!  
I saw that like merges with the like;  
And everywhere I saw but God—  
In this, and this and this.  
If all that is, is Thou, O God,  
What sport of Thine are all these forms?

8. I entered by the garden gate of mine own self  
And there, O joy! I saw Siva with Sakti sealed  
In one. And there in the nectar lake of bliss  
I was absorbed, and though alive, I was  
As dead. What care I now what happens to me?



9. The self is ever new, the Moon is ever new;  
So do I see the world for ever new and new.  
Since I, Lalla, scoured my body and mind,  
(all yesterdays and tomorrows faded away),  
I live in the ever-present Now—  
For ever new and new.

It is hard to restrain from quoting even though one wishes it were the original, not the translation. But I must end, and now move on to the *Vaakh* or *shrukhs* of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali of Tsrar-i Sharif, the Patron Saint of Kashmir, a younger contemporary of Lal Ded, who was certainly influenced by her. Islam spread too rapidly to strike deep roots during these early years or to transform completely the entire body of indigenous mystic tradition and the observances the people had inherited. We have had in Kashmir two kinds of Muslim saints; one, native to the soil, the Rishis or Bābās; the other, who came from foreign lands to propagate Islam as proselytizing missionaries. The famous chronicle of Akbar's time, *Ain-i-Akbari*, records that 'The Rishis are the most respectable people, who do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are true worshippers of God, and revile not any other sect'. Even as late as the last decade of the last century, Sir Walter Lawrence, who knew the Valley intimately, observed that 'the rural Muslim population was very unlike other Muslims in the matter of tolerance for Hindus and reverence for the shrines of the Rishis'. The founding-father of the Rishi Order and the most distinguished of them was Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, popularly known as Nund Rishi. Though his *shrukhs* are exhortative in tone and didactic in content they have enriched Kashmiri with wise saws and pithy sayings that have become proverbial. For instance:



1. Amid the rocks the fount was lost;  
Among the thieves was lost the saint,  
Among the ignorant the wise man was lost;  
And the swan was lost among the crows.
2. The oriole seeks out a flower garden;  
The owl seeks out a deserted spot;  
The she-jackal searches dreary wastes;  
The donkey runs after dung and dirt.
3. No wonder, born of the same father and mother  
We bear no ill-will to one another.  
Should our love bind us all alike—  
Hindus and Musalmans—  
Then surely God is pleased with us.
4. Love is death of an only son to mother—  
Can she have any sleep?  
Love is venomous stings of a swarm of wasps—  
Can the sufferer have any rest?  
Love is the piercing thrust of a sharp rapier—  
Can the victim bear the pain?

As I have said already, it is not that there are not other poetic forms. We have, for instance, Bhatta Avātar's *Bānāsura Vaddha* based on the romance of Usha and Anirudha narrated in the *Harivamsha Purāna*, which is the first secular poem that can be dated, having been written in the glorious reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, Badshah, the Great King (1420-1470 A.D.). There is Ganaka Prashasta's *Sukhadukhacaritam*, a Kashmiri didactic poem on the art of happy living. We have references also to *Zaina Prakāsha*, a play on Zain-ul-Abidin by Yodha Bhatta, and to *Zaina Carita*, a biography of the Sultan, by Nāthsoma, written during the all too

brief period of literary resurgence during the peaceful reign of the Great King.

4

We now came to the second period, 1555 to 1720. During this period Persian is firmly established not only as the official language but also as the language of literary output; and talented Kashmiris turn to it increasingly for expressing their poetical urges. To name only three such eminent poets: Maulana Yakub Sarfi Ganai (1552-1594), who produced his encyclopaedic work in Persian during this time; Khwaja Habib Ullah Nawshehri (1555-1617), who wrote treatises on mysticism; and Mirza Akmal-ud-Din Kamil (1642-1717), the author of *Bahar-ul-'Irfān*, a Persian masnavi of 80,000 couplets. While these substantial products of mind find expression in Persian, songs and mystical *Vaakh* continue to be written in Kashmiri as by Rupa Bhawani (1625-1721 c.) and even by some of those who usually wrote in Persian like Habib Ullah Nawshehri. There is, however, a pronounced change in them. They become longer in the length of the line and the number of lines, and a refrain is added to them. We call them *Vatsan*, stanzas of three lines followed by the refrain (*vooj*). This one, for instance, from Nawshehri:

I surrendered completely to love,  
*And God is pleased with me.*

Be true to love and you will taste  
The wine that fills the River of Life  
That brought us hither, from whose waters  
God hath made every living thing.  
*And God is pleased with me.*



Some drink cup after cup unceasingly;  
Some, while drinking, attain to the Goal;  
Some wait and wait unavailingly.  
*And God is pleased with me.*

The poet, it may be observed, has, as in this little song, begun to introduce quotations from, or make references to, the Holy Koran: Here, to '*vaj'alnaa minalmaa-i kul-i shayan hai*'.

The chief contribution of this period is, however, a new kind of song which tells of secular human love. It is the *lol*-lyric of Kashmiri. The *lol*-lyric is a short poem, an utterance of a single mood, usually in six lines or ten lines, including the refrain. It is a thing of music, a very melodious music, with its end rhymes and medial rhymes and recurring refrains, its alliterations and assonances that come naturally as the very stuff of the language which has a high proportion of vowels and semi-vowels to its consonants, and in which gutturals and harsh consonants are rare. There is in them a flexibility of rhythm; the metre is not yet made to fit in quite within the precision of Persian quantitative pattern. It states no theme; it is not an intellectual lyric at all and is written as though to relieve the mind in song and to find

'... a very echo to the seat  
Where love is throned.'

It is the woman that is the lover. She sings of *lol*, a Kashmiri word signifying an untranslatable complex of love, longing and a tugging at the heart, and of 'a longingness, poor longingness', in Walter de La Mare's phrase. The *lol* lyrics sing of love in various moods. Love's longing, its 'smarts and burns' and anguish; the



expectation and the elation of love; the long long waiting for Love who does not come and the yearning deepens, and so deepens the anguish of separation. She begins to doubt Love's fidelity and flings accusations at him, the perfidious, the reckless, the visitor of a hundred homes, the voluptuary. There are other moods, but the tone is usually plaintive, wistful, melancholic. We rarely find a whole-hearted abandon to joy. They have few allusions and fewer ornaments; but they have directness, simplicity, sometimes naivete, and a tender poignancy of feeling.

Say Love, how shall I fill my days  
When you are not by me?

or

Don't be angry, Myna dear,  
It's love has smitten me.

These aires and songs are arranged in the books of song, *mausiqis*, according to *muqāms* (or *rāgs*), some Hindustani like *malhar*, *bhairavi*, *janjoti* and some Irani like *dugāh*, *navā*, *rāst-i-fārsi*, *rāsti-i-Kashmiri*.

1. *ranga ranga saa'ry gul aay*  
*madano kati caa'ny jaay*  
Flowers have bloomed in all their hues,  
Love where are you?  
The graceful roses came:  
The tuberose and the balsam  
And also *sonaposh*  
Have shone forth from the odorous night.  
The larkspur and the hyacinth  
Have daintily burst into bloom.  
But where are you?

2. *twahi maa dyuthvan su hay*  
*ye'my ba' do'hay gaa'jnas*

Have you not seen him who  
Hath smitten me with love?  
He makes me suffer so:

I am like one  
Whom frost in winter binds  
And heat in summer melts,  
And who, for Love, restless runs  
Like restless brooks.

I was a backwoods pine,  
Alone, unknown;  
He found me out, my Woodcutter,  
And felled me down,  
And cut me into logs.  
The logs he burnt  
And ashes I remain,  
My youth and beauty gone.

3. *haari tota melinaa haay vanhaa'ree*  
Will parrot not to Starling come  
And my beloved unto me?

I have seen Starling pine for love,  
And blood-red wound of Poppy's breast.  
I have heard Dove's lovelorn note  
And known Dove's pallor creep on me.  
Will parrot not to Starling come,  
And my beloved unto me?

4. *baalayaar aangan tsaav*  
Love entered my courtyard  
And looked about and went;  
In a moment he was gone.  
Were he to come again, I would complain:  
'Why need you be haughty,



Why must you be unkind?  
You come but do not stay,  
In hurry you come,  
In haste are gone.

5. And this one which shows the influence of Persian:

*moy con chu so'mbul*

Your tresses are a hyacinth,  
bewitching one and all;  
When you let fall your tresses,  
fragrant basil boughs,  
Bulbuls flock and are entrapped.  
Your airs and graces, daggers keen,  
They slay the lovers' hearts.  
Your finger-tips, dyed in their blood  
Are tokens of your kill.  
Your bough-like arches cusped  
Set off your almond eyes.  
Your face, a narcissus in bloom—  
All these indubitably make  
A very garden of love.

6. *gaah sapadaan traam, gaah sapadaan lway*

Now he becomes copper,  
Now he becomes bronze.  
Inconstant he!  
He does not keep his vows  
And fickle is.  
We should not fall in love  
With such as he.  
I followed him till I turned grey,  
He now visits some other's house—  
This visitor of a hundred homes.  
Perfidious he!

His locks are dark as evening,  
 As morning bright his face.  
 But promises he does not keep,  
 His vows he breaks.  
 Faithless he!

Two of the writers of these songs have undoubtedly been women, Haba Khatoon of the sixteenth and Arnimal of the eighteenth century. It is to Haba Khatoon that we owe not only the secular *lol* lyric but also the longer *vatsan* lyric which was, later, employed by the unknown author of *Krishnāvtarlīla* in the last years of this, the Mughal period. It is based, like the *Premasagara* of India, on the tenth *skanda* of the *Bhagvata Purana*, which it follows closely. It started a new art-form, of the *lila* lyric, which flourished in the 19th century.

From 1720 to 1819, the Afghan rule, is a bleak period. There is little literary output, and we find little gaiety of tone in poetry. The times were torn by faction and feud, the rulers had turned into mere oppressors of people, and the land of plenty had turned into a land of scarcity, of recurring floods, famines and epidemics. These hundred years are, however, enlivened somewhat by the tender poignant *lol* lyrics of Arnimal and the sufi songs of Shah Gafoor, which are, strictly speaking, not in conformity with orthodoxy and which express, what we call, *hama-os* (all that is, is He) sufism. It is significant that in Kashmir there has been a long and persistent tradition, up to the present day, of this kind of sufism which is allied to Hindu mysticism and is, therefore, also known as *shastu'r* (*shastra*) amongst us.



We now come to the nineteenth century, a very prolific period of our literature. I shall, however, try not to clutter this paper with the numerous poetical works that were produced nor all the various kinds of them, mentioning and illustrating only the main poets and their works. This is the age of *masnavi*, of the metrical romance, of legends of love and adventure, of the exploits of war, which do not lend themselves to verisimilitude, partaking as they do of impossible exploits and astonishingly incredible deeds of valour and adventure. Persian had spread to the countryside through *maktabs* and had been firmly established as the literary language of the educated classes. We discern the beginnings of a new literary age which, in its dominant urges and characteristics, endures for a hundred years even through the first quarter of the present century. As often happens, this new movement owed its impetus to the influence of a foreign language, and several art-forms, *masnavi*, *ghazal*, *marsiya*, *shaharāshob*, *daastan*, were freely borrowed, enriching the indigenous literature. There began a spate of translations and adaptations from the Persian originals, and the Kashmiri poet turned to old Persian themes of legend and history, to Yusuf and Zulaikha, Shīrīn and Farhād, Wāmiq and ‘Azra, Laila and Majoon, Sohrāb and Rustum, Sām and Nareman, and many more. Some of the poets versified the indigenous legends of *Himāl* (Love of an Aryan girl for a Naga prince) and *Akanandun* (an Issac and Abraham kind of a story), and some others chose themes and stories from the *Mahabhārata* and the *Purana*-s or translated the *Ramayana*; and some in the later quarter of the century, rendered even the Punjabi romances of *Heer Ranjha*, *Sohni Mahival* into Kashmiri verse. By far the largest number of Kashmiri masnavis

are *Bazmiya* (love) romances; but there is an impressive list of *Razmiya* (battles and wars) masnavis though their merit is not high. There are, besides, *Hazliya* (comic-satiric) narratives in the masnavi style but their number is comparatively small. Mahmud Gami (d. 1855) started the vogue with his eight masnavis. He was followed by Waliullah with his *Himāl* and, soon after, by Maqbul Shah (1820-1875), the author of the most famous masnavi, *Gulrez*, and his comic-satiric narrative on the Kashmiri farmer of his day, the *Greestnāma*. Contemporaneously, came Prakash Ram with his *Rāmāyana* (1847) and *Lava Kusha Carit*, followed by Lakshman Raina Bulbul (1826-1898) with his *Sāmnāma* (1874) and *Nal-o-Daman* (Nala Damayanti). In the last quarter of the century came other poets of masnavis, Pir Mohi-ud-din Miskin, (d. 1915 c.), Pir Aziz Ullah Haqqani (1854-1928), and the most voluminous writer of them all, Wahab Pare of Hājin (1845-1914), who translated Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* in four volumes.

All these and many more poets write their Kashmiri masnavis in couplet form, employing Persian metres, notably *bahr-i-hazaj*, inevitably introducing Persian words and phrases. Kashmiri verse loses its flexibility and the metre becomes more correct and straitlaced; and we find many poets borrowing wholesale not only words but epithets and phrases, imagery and conceits, often hackneyed, from the classical Persian poetry. Many poets write, in the masnavi style, *Hamd*, *N'at* and *Shakl-o-shumāyil* as well as *Mojizāti Rasul-i-Akram* (on whom be peace!), and also formal elegies on the martyrdom of Karbala.

I cannot, in the brief span of this paper, illustrate the different kinds of masnavis nor their several styles; and I shall rest content with a short quotation, in translation,



from the famous love masnavi, *Gulrez*. Noshlab and Ajab Malik meet in the garden where they are found asleep, locked in embrace, by Noshlab's mother. Enraged, she orders her attendant *pere*-s to remove Noshlab undisturbed to her own bed-chamber and Ajab Malik to far-off Turkistan. When the day dawns for Noshlab, she wakes up and cries:

*subuh pho'l bulbulav tul shor-u ghaughaa*

*gayas bedaar mutsu'ryam cashmi shahlaa . . .*

The day dawned and the bulbuls chirped noisily  
And long, awakening me from sweet slumber  
And sleep-laden eyes of a heavy sleeper on a cool  
Morning in the spring. Methought I was  
Beside my love, but when I looked and looked,  
I found the garden gone and gone my Love  
And last night's revelry. My dawn was turned  
To dusk, my joy to grief. I found no sign  
Of him nor flowers to sport among; instead  
All thorns to wound my heart; no treasure to find,  
Instead the Dragon fierce. No longer I  
Believed my eyes, and cried: 'Alas, it was  
A dream I yesternight had dreamed when Love  
And I in ecstasy did lie. And now  
In fever of body and anguish of soul, I called  
To him: 'My true yet faithless Love, so sweet  
And warm, yet sour and cold; lull me to sleep  
Yet leave me thus to nurse separation's grief?  
But no, you would not leave me thus to grieve,  
And give up hope of meeting you again,  
My own true Love, save whom I cannot sleep  
Nor rest. My Pearl, where have you stayed away  
O where? My lamentations reach you not.  
O morning breeze, waft you my plaint to him  
With courtesy, and with sweet aires awaken

34  
His love for me who, in the bloom of youth,  
Fade as the yellow rose doth fade when winter  
Draws nigh. How does a starling feel on a pan  
Of fire and *tosa-pashmina* shawl when moths  
Eat into it—so you may feel what hath  
Befallen me, and that I cannot live  
When you, my Love, are far away . . .

It is not as if other, and older forms, were altogether discarded. Songs and ghazals continue to be written but they lose their former tender poignancy and simplicity though they gain in sensuousness and ornateness. Rasul Mir (d. 1870 c.) is the best song and ghazal writer of the time which he endows with passion and ardour. He turns his back on mysticism which, under the compulsion of Persian tradition of ghazal had become an unavoidable theme of Kashmiri ghazal together with love. Now man loves woman, and the poet is lavish, almost uninhibited, in describing her charms.

Moreover, a considerable body of sufi songs are produced throughout the century. They are unequal in merit; many are homiletic and platitudinous and even obscure. But there are several notable exceptions in whom are evident the qualities that make mysticism poetry, intense sincerity, authentic insight and large-hearted love. This, for instance:

At the village fount the fairies sing,  
Hear, O hear, that song is sweet.

The sea is deep, the shore far off  
The maimed and the blind sit on this side,  
Wringing their hands in despair.  
How can the blind take any aim?  
Their bows and arrows are in vain.



On this storm-swept sea, countless boats  
Are set adrift. Some sink, some float;  
And I, tossed on the mid-most deeps,  
See not the shore nor way across.  
Show me the way, a stranger lost.

I found the way that leads across:  
I made of mine ownself a bridge  
and spanned the wide ocean.  
There, on the other shore, I found  
‘annihilation in Divine’;  
But found not I, on the shore beyond,  
the Hindu or the Muslman.

The mad Aziz proclaims the truth  
To saints and sages known before;  
The secret truth that all are one and love is all.

AZIZ DERVESH (d. 1890)

There is in Kashmiri a long tradition of comic-satiric narratives on contemporary conditions of the times, deriving from the famous Sanskrit poet, Kshemendra, of the 11th centuries. The Kashmiri has developed the gift of laughing at himself, even at his discomfiture under the stress of natural calamities. Often enough this has been his only armour against fate. These narratives came to be known as *shaharāshob*, when written in masnavi distich, and as *larishah*, when written in the *vatsan* style and in brisk metres. There are many masnavis describing floods, (*sahlab-nāma-s*), fires (*ātishnāma-s*) and official tyranny and chaos (*be’boojnāma-s*) as also on farmers and *mullas* and *pirs*. Here is a short extract:

Seeing him come, the farmer and his wife  
Come out to meet the village functionary.  
‘Please’, they plead,<sup>6</sup> dismount, come in and rest

Awhile and let us press your feet and show  
Our deep regard for you. Only last night  
We said you had not been this side for quite  
Sometime. Need you be told that we regard  
Our children as our hostages to you'.

But when they see the village priest approach,  
The man and wife run to the cattle pen  
And hide themselves. They tell their children  
To see, as if they see not, if he comes  
Or goes away. Should he come in, they say  
To him, 'Father is gone in search of grain;  
For fuel mother to the forest went.  
For six long days we had no food to eat;  
And father prayed to God for you to come,  
To beg of you to part with some old clothes  
To cover his nakedness, protect himself  
From cold'. This told, the priest, bereft of hope,  
Sorry feels for having come so far,  
And lest he should importuned be and lose  
His shawl or gown, he thinks it wise to go  
Away. Lucky he thinks he would be if  
He does not meet the farmer on his way.

The *larishah* poems give us dramatic snippets and  
concrete humorous situations in telling colloquial idiom.  
There is nothing vague and amorphous about them nor  
do they use the learned stale diction of the masnavis.

Said an old granny in a wild flurry,

'Oh, woe is me! Oh, woe is me!

O where is my headgear?'

'O Granny dear, O Granny dear,

The yellow floods have carried if off,

The Vishav has overflowed her banks'.



or

'What you were used to cannot now be,'

To his own dear wife said the Patwārī;

'We cannot tamper with the revenue record,

For Lawrence of London has thus decreed'.

6

It now remains for me to speak of another distinguished literary art-form, namely, that of the *lila* of the *lila*-group of poets, whose forte is a poetic composition in praise of the *lila* (literally, sport) of God as Person, chiefly as Krishna, the Avatar. They are primarily devotional poems, with a greater abandon and joy than is to be found in any other Kashmiri poetry. The universe exists: it is real and it is good. Indeed, all creation is the over-flowing of the creator's joy, a Nataraja's dance. We have not only *lila* songs or lyrics but also, in the *vatsan* form, 3-line stanzas with a refrain, long *lila* narrative poems. Paramanand (1791-1885) wrote three such poems, *Sudāmacarit* (The story of Sudama), *Rādhāsvyamvar* (The choice of Radha's Spouse) and *Siva lagan* (The Marriage of Siva). By any standard, Paramanand would be a significant poet in any language. Each of these three narrative poems has the unity of the mystical idea of man's quest for God and of God for man. He wrote other significant poems, the allegorical *Sri Amaranath Yatra*, *Karmabhūmika* (The Field of Action), *Kulta Tshaay* (The Tree and the Shadow) and many *lila* songs, distinguished both for their memorable diction and the profundity of thought. Another famous *lila* poet was Krishna Razdan (d. 1925), who also wrote *Siva Parinaya* (The Marriage of Siva). He has a whole-hearted abandon and light-heartedness; and his *lila* songs are not only melodious but also free from allegorical meanings, and

recondite allusions to *cakra*-s and techniques of yogic *sādhana*.

Gentlemen, I am sure I have strained (through inwardly admired) your patience but I would entreat you to bear with me a few moments more to put some flesh on the bare bones of the last paragraphs and give you a brief extract from Paramanand's poem, *Sahaza Ve'tsaar*, in translation:

In the mine-windowed mansion of the body,  
The mind wanders free and turns its gaze  
Outward, now looking through this sense-window  
Now that, diverted by the multitudinous glory  
Of life without. Close these outlets fast  
And shut it in, and turn its gaze inwards,  
Communing with the Self within, the subtle  
All-encompassing *cit* which inhabits all that is,  
And in which all things live and move. There shines  
The self-effulgent Sun, in unborrowed light,  
Who rises not nor sets, eternal and undimmed.  
Then love will blow to every corner of the self,  
Kindling a devouring fire in every fibre  
Of thy being; and like oil feeding fire,  
Feed the flames of love wherever it glows.  
The more it burns, the brighter glows the flame,  
And burns all selfhoods till naught is left but He.  
This inmost sanctum seen, shut not thyself  
Within, for God is everywhere without.  
Throw open all sense-gates and let the mind  
Go where it will. It cannot go where God is not.

Gentlemen, I have done. Thank you.



## PARAMANAND:

### *A Nineteenth Century Kashmiri Poet*

'There are', says Plotinus, 'different roads by which this end (the apprehension of the Infinite) may be reached: the love of beauty, which exalts the poet; that devotion to the One and that ascent of science which makes the ambition of the philosopher; and that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out as from the deeps of the soul'. I begin with a quotation from Plotinus to suggest that (and it is as marvellous a coincidence as it is significant) across distance of time and space and in spite of divergence of country, race, religion and cultural environment, all mystics everywhere, with the inevitable difference in idiom and shift of emphasis, agree on certain basic facts of experience. This experience is ineffable, not a sensory-intellectual experience at all; it is the apprehension of an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things, a Oneness or a One to which neither the senses nor reason has access. The One is the Ground of the inner self as well as the external world. And what some mystics call the One, the ultimate Reality or Being, others often identify with God. Union is interpreted as the union with, or nearness to, the ultimate Being or God, wherein one's self or individuality either 'melts away', merges with, or is exalted into the Boundless Being. This union brings with it an ineffable peace, blessedness

and joy, and also a burning love of God which, in some mystics, overflows in the form of love of fellow-men.

In the idiom of Hindu mystical tradition, the ultimate Ground of all that is, the Reality, is a unity in diversity. The One is the Real, sages call it variously: *ekam sat*, *vīpra bahuda vadanti*, is the earliest statement of this mystic truth in the *Rig Veda*. And *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*—

सर्वभूतेषु मे नैकं भावमव्ययमीदृजते

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु, तज्ज्ञानं विदि सात्त्विकम् । (XVIII, 20)

Know thou that knowledge which is *Sātvik*, pure;  
To see one indestructible Being in all beings,  
and in all multitudinous forms, one Inseparable.  
The Hindu believes that in whatsoever way men approach God, even so does He welcome them, for the paths men take from every side reach Him.

ये यथा मां पश्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वक्षाः । (IV, 11)

While therefore the ways of approach to God are many, as many as the forms or aspects of the One-Infinite, the Hindu mystic has recognised the three highways of *jnana*, *karma*, and *bhakti*, psychologically corresponding to the triune aspect of the human mind, cognition, conation and emotion. Of these *bhakti* may well be the first step, but it is certainly also the last and final step; for by devotion man knows God in essence, who and what He is; and having known Him thus, he enters the Supreme.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा, विप्राते तदनन्तरम् । (XVIII, 55)

These are, if we may call them so, the philosophical contents of Paramanand's poetry; but he is a *bhakti* mystic



and the love of man for God and of God for men is the predominant underlying theme or, in Tillyard's significant phrase, the great commonplace of his poetry. It is not stated analytically and directly as a philosopher would but as a poet would, 'obliquely' in, what is universally recognised as the language both of mystics as well as of poets, the language of myth, symbol and allegory. The human soul pursues God and God ('the Hound of Heaven') pursues the human soul in a perpetual *rās-līla* or dance-play. This is the central theme which Paramanand works out in his three longer poems, *Rādhāsvyamvara*, *Sudāmacarita*, and *Siva Lagan*. His poetry, like that of other mystic poets, is intimately bound up with his beliefs; and, bred and brought up as a Hindu as he was, it is built round the myths, beliefs and *sādhana*-s (mystic practices), symbolism and allusions of the Hindus.

Philosophy, albeit mystical, is not, however, poetry. It becomes poetry only when the poet's imagination 'bodies forth the forms of things', that is, ideas and experiences are incarnated, and 'turned into shapes'. A verse from the Mathnavi of Jalāl-ud-Din Rūmi (Nicholson's translation edited by Professor Arberry)—

'Vision increases the power of speech;

The inspired speech makes the vision more penetrat-  
ting,

very tersely and profoundly states the relation between mystical experience and its expression as poetry. Neither the doctrine, the elements of a system or philosophy, nor the attitude of reverence or the language of piety, nor even its purpose of moral instruction or spiritual edification, would of themselves transmute mysticism into poetry unless it has the qualities of inspiration, vision and power. But these qualities are rare; and in the vast

body of sacred verse of any country or language, the poets whose mystical poetry has the authentic ring of spiritual inspiration, whose mystical insight, in the words of Maulvi Rūm, has penetration, and whose speech has power—such poets are, like angels' visits, few and far between.

Mysticism is a dominant theme in Kashmiri poetry as, I daresay, in the poetry of all Indian languages. Right from the fourteenth century, from Shiti Kantha, Lal Ded and Noor-ud-Din Vali (Nund Rishi) up to the *lilā* songs of Krishna Razdan (d. 1925), the *sufi* songs of Samad Mīr (d. 1959) and Ahad Zargar of the present day, we have had noteworthy mystic poets, both Hindus and Muslims. But much of what even some of the noteworthy among them have written is unequal in merit, at its average didactic and homiletic, though popular an account of pithy sayings and wise saws. It is largely imitative of Persian, not only of *sufi* ideas and vocabulary but also the imagery, symbol and conceit, often stale enough; while at times it is platitudinous, morbidly gloomy and even obscure. But there are exceptions in quite a few poems written by the well-known among them and certainly in the *Vākhs*, verse-sayings, of Lal Ded. And there is Paramanand.

## 2

Nand Ram (1791-1885), better known by his pen-name 'Paramanand', was the son of Krishna Pandit, and was born in his father's village Si:r, seven miles from Mattan, a famous pilgrimage-place on the pilgrim way to Sri Amaranatha cave. His mother, Saraswati, came from Mattan where his father was a patwāri and where he himself later made his permanent home. Si:r has a sacred spring, a shrine of the goddess Saraswati, where



young Nand Ram worshipped, though at a later date, he seems to have shifted his devotions to Mother Bharga Shikha, a shrine sacred to Sri Durga, picturesquely situated on top of a hill which forms the background of the famous Mattan springs.

In steadfast faith worship Nav Durga,  
in her *Bharga* aspect as Resplendent Light,  
Whom the dwellers of Heaven worship,  
none other than our own *Ishtadevi*.

The streamlets and springs set in relief with the adjoining hills of the pretty village of Mattan must have stirred in Paramanand his sense of the beautiful and the musical; and to this we owe some very charming devotional lyrics sung extempore by him. He seems to have been fond of music, and himself played on the *sitār* in accompaniment to his songs. Life at Mattan must also have brought him into contact with sadhus coming from outside Kashmir; and his poems reveal his familiarity with the *Bhāgvatpurāna* and *Sivapurāna*, the *Mahabharata*, *Shatcakra upāsana*, and Kundalini Yoga, and the broad principles of Vedānta and Kashmir Saivism. He is also said to have intently listened to the recitations from *Guru Granth Saheb* by a Sikh sadhu. This, apart from evoking in him piety and devotion, has left its imprint in several songs with which his *Rādhāsvyamvara* is interspersed and which are written in, what may be called, Punjabi Hindi.

We find few references in his poems to the events of his own life except where he bemoans his lonely helplessness in old age, as in the lines

Alone and lonely, and in despair,  
Childless, with eyesight nearly lost—  
I am Thy blind man, Lord! and Thou

alone to lead me by the hand;  
For should I stumble into a pit,  
The pit too, I should know, is Thine.

Paramanand, it may be mentioned, had two sons and two daughters but neither of his sons survived him; one of them died at a very early age while the other died young, leaving a widow behind. There is, however, remarkably little discontent in his poetry, there is no gloom and certainly no despair; the only wail is of a God-lover's wail of separation from his God.

At the death of his father, when he was twenty-five, he succeeded to the village *patwār* and, till he resigned from it many years later, he was the village *patwārī*; but he seems to have lived radiantly happy in his poverty unmindful of his wife Malded's scoldings and to have retained the sanity of humour to satirize his own job. This is what he said about one Radhumal Misra, a petty Revenue official of his day:—

A line without a dot is Misra Radhumal,  
a calamity on top of calamities.  
As if encamped at Wular Lake, he fulminates,  
blowing hornets from his mouth.  
'In Mattan he, our officer, intends  
to make at *shrāda* a gift of *patwārīs*,  
so many heads than cattle cheaper far—  
whom will he please to choose?' they trembling ask.  
Say, will the revenue record of the *patwārīs*  
be ever set right?

Paramanand's genius flowered rather late; but when the call came, it was unmistakable and there was no denying it. 'Listen', he expostulates with himself, 'Saraswati Herself is speaking to you'. He resigned his *patwār* and gave up his days to practical mysticism, *upāsana* and *yoga*; and soon gathered round him a band



of devoted disciples among them Lakshman Raina Bulbul, a poet in his own right, and Saheb Ganai, the Lambardar, who helped to keep him above want. He died at a ripe old age of 93; and the poet Bulbul, his disciple, mourned his death in a Persian chronogram verse:

Bulbul kashīd nālah badil guft hān ze dam  
 bā hoy-o hāy sāz ki gulshan khazān girift  
 (The nightingale uttered a heart-piercing cry:  
 The garden is in the grip of autumn, alas!)

### 3

Paramanand's poems may roughly be divided into shorter and longer poems. The shorter poems comprise (a) *stotra*-s, hymns or songs in praise of Sri Ganesha, Sri Rājna Devi, Siva or other deities; (b) poems predominantly didactic for the edification of spiritual aspirants; (c) three allegorical poems; and *lila*-lyrics many of them interspersed among the three longer poems; and (d) what may be called, the purely mystical poems, the fruit of his lifelong *sādhana* and self-realisation. It is probably right to say that this order of classification is their chronological order.

The *stotra*-s are inferior as poetry. In them there is no note of exaltation, no revelation. They usually sing praises of the deities, asking for a true direction of the will and strength to resist worldly temptations. In some of them the poet sometimes speaks in the effete metaphor of the prevalent love poetry: his heart is 'turned to ashes in love's hot oven'. These are evidently early attempts, and there are not many of them; and even in these few we notice that the poet looks inwards and locates the deities within himself: the god Ganesha is the sovereign lord of *Caturdala Mandala* while god Siva is the rising, resplendent sun of the *Dwādashānta Mandala*.

In quite a few of them there is poignancy and pathos and sometimes a convincing personal note.

Another, but not a very clear-cut group of his poems, is predominantly didactic. In them we find a conciseness of expression and perspicuity; ideas, albeit somewhat commonplace, so expressed as to make them memorable.

Slavery is one's own; freedom is one's own:

Who is a slave? He who is attached to the world.

Who is free? He who renounces attachment.

Senses are the enemies; senses are the friends;

Now they act as fire, now they act as water.

Then there are the three allegorical poems. First, the poem on the famous pilgrimage to Sri Amaranatha Cave which starts from Srinagar. It is significant for the dexterity with which the poet interweaves the pilgrim's progress from one sacred shrine to another with the yogic pilgrimage within one's own self, plexus to plexus. The keynote is struck in the very first verse:

In the cave of the body is Satchidananda *linga*.

Seated unattached on the inmost pedestal of mind

Which people call the cave of Kailāsh.

The pilgrim has to discover and reach this goal. He starts from Ganapatyar, in the heart of Srinagar (Sri Ganesha, the lord of *mūlādvaṛ*, very close to one's ownself); thence to Shurāyār where begins the labyrinth of the jhelum (the maze of *Kundalini*); then through the many stages and shrines to sheshnāg (the domain of Isvara), and to Panchitarani where he has to cross the five streams (the five *karma* and *jñāna indriya*-s); up Mount Bhairva, a hard ascent to overcome the Ego; thence to the Amrāvati, the Stream of Immortality and to Lord Siva's abode, where the pilgrim must surrender himself and all, leaving aside other gods and goddesses. No translation summary can



however indicate the unhindered flow of the verse or its successful interweaving of allegory and fact with the pilgrimage.

The *yātrā* is a remarkable allegory of places names. Even more remarkable is the allegory of farming in the second poem, *karmabhūmikā* ('The Field of Action') which is the more popular poem with its more familiar and easily intelligible farming technique, and its impressive exhortation:

karmabhūmikāyi dizi dharmuk bal  
santūshibyaḷi bavi ānandaphal  
dwayi prāna dāndajūry dyan ta rāth vāy  
kumbhaka kura zora timu'nu'y lāy  
hila kar yuth na bi:th rozi kānh ryal . . .

Manure thy field of action with  
the loam of righteousness,  
Then sow the seed of contentment  
to reap the crop of bliss.  
Plough on both day and night  
with the oxen of twin breath.  
Drive them relentlessly and hard  
with the lashings of the *kumbhaka* whip.  
Rest not lest any patch of the field  
remains unploughed . . .

and so on and on. It is remarkable for the intimate welding of the farmer's round of duties with the spiritual aspirant's *sādhana*, a welding effected through the alchemy of metaphor. Incidentally, the poem gives us a picture of the relationship between the tenant farmer, the landless labourer, and the landlord of his day. On an allied theme he wrote a short poem at the request of a sufi-poet, Wahab Khar, beginning

'Pa':ntsu'truyi ba':glis karaardaadas  
 vaadas zyaady na zi kam  
 karu'khay go'ngul nav aabaadas  
 praani haatsi tulu'nay na nam  
 khwad aabaad kar mo praar kaadas  
 vaadas zyaada na zi kam . . . '

In abiding by your contract, of five parts to three,  
 There can be neither more nor less.

Would you bring your fallow land under the plough,  
 For your old lapses you will not be taken to task.

Gird up your loins, take up the plough and do not  
 Wait for the offer of your neighbour's help . . .

Paramanand uses his native colloquial idiom with effect and verve, and there is a terse pointedness and a proverbial ring about numerous verses of his which have passed into current speech. Even when he has to use Sanskrit words, as the inevitable words in the context, he uses them as they were used in common speech, that is, not as a Pundit would use them but as they were adapted to the peculiar phonetics and syntax of his native tongue.

The third of the allegorical poems is *Kul ta Tsa:y*, (The Tree and the Shadow), which Paramanand wrote very appropriately in the masnavi distich while *Amaranath Yātrā* and *Karmabhūmikā* were written in the *vatsan* form, that is, a 4-line stanza with the fourth line as the refrain, rhyming in the former a a a R, b b b R and so on and in the latter a a R R, b b R R and so on. *Vatsan* stanzas, it may be said, are more suited for poems to be sung in chorus. This poem is less known. It is about a long-standing dispute between the Tree and the Shadow. They come to the Sun to arbitrate. The Shadow complains: 'The Tree stands between me and the Sun



and does not let me have a glimpse of him'. The Tree answers: 'You owe your very existence to me and should I leave my place to let you see the Sun, you will be no more'. 'But suppose', says the Shadow, 'I wish to see the truth of it for myself'. And, presently, when the Sun shines through the branches of the Tree, she feels her lips going dry out of the fear of death. She realizes that she cannot see the Sun apart from the Tree. Now, asks the poet, what are the Sun, the Tree and the Shadow? The Sun is the Reality beyond all forms and yet the light and sustenance of all that exists. The Tree is the three-*guna* manifestation of the *nirguna* Reality, while the Shadow is the Jiva, the phenomenal consciousness. To Paramanand the multitudinous show of life and the universe is the phenomenon by which the formless Reality is made manifest.

#### 4

The next group of Paramanand's shorter poems consists of *lila*-lyrics. In them the poet sings as a lover-devotee of God as Person, chiefly Sri Krishna. There is in all of them a note of abandon, of joy and gaiety, and in the best of them the quality of, what Jalal-ud-Din Rūmi calls, 'the inspired speech'. His poetry has pre-eminently the quality of ecstasy of those who 'break through to the Oneness'; and he is, like all true mystics, irrepressibly happy and divinely drunk. This note of ecstasy was new to Kashmiri poetry which till about the first quarter of the nineteenth century is characterised by little abandon of joy, sensuous or supernal, and little gaiety of tone. Not only the sacred but also the secular verse is largely plaintive and sad. But for Paramanand the universe exists, and it is good. All creation is a manifestation, an everflowing of God's joy, his dance-

play, a *rās-līlā*; and, in the words of the allegorical poem, *The Tree and the Shadow*, the Shadow (the human soul) cannot see the Sun (the Paramatman) except through the Tree (the *bhūpa* of the Vedas). He even questions:

What use is realisation if you cease to be?

Be yourself and realise the Supreme Self.

I will now give a few instances in translation; but no translation can quite catch the dancing rhythm and music of the original.

Drunk with the wine of love, the Gopa maids  
In thousands surged to join the circle dance;  
And hand in hand they clasped with shouts of joy:  
'Rādhā, Rādhā, Rādhākṛishnajī.'

Confusion cleared and doubt removed from all  
Who thither came all mad in ecstasy—  
Nārada, Dhruva, Shukdeva, Prahlāda—  
They shout for joy: 'Rādhākṛishnajī.'

Could we compare abode of Indra with  
The Bindraban of old, beyond our dreams?  
Here, on the earth, that day all those who came  
Knew freedom from the bondage of the flesh  
Which came as grace from Rādhākṛishnajī.

The scales fell off their eyes. Even trees and plants  
And stones laid bare their inmost heart to love,  
And all attained to *mukti* in Gokul  
By grace of Rādhā, Rādhākṛishnajī.

In steadfast faith we realised the truth:  
Our dance devotion is and knowledge true,  
*Samādhi* in our wakeful activity,  
In company of Rādhākṛishnajī.



Where love is like an ocean limitless,  
Where sour and sweet are equally welcome,  
And where we are beyond all trace of sin,  
There do we dance with Râdhâkrishnajî.

or

The sun has streaked the sky with light,  
The morn is come.  
In gardens rose and jasmine bloom,  
The songbirds sing their songs of love  
My love, have you not heard of me?

It is the time of blissful peace,  
The time when nectar rains down the sky.  
This surely is the immortal hour,  
The hour of God's immortal dower.  
This is the time, O Lakshmana,  
To open the windows of your love.

'Open the windows of your love', says the poet; and that sets the key for the *lila*-lyric. In music and a whole-hearted abandon, his lyrics may be equalled, even surpassed; but no one has surpassed him in combining these qualities with depth of meaning and passionate intensity. Here, in translation again, is a *lila*-lyric characteristic of him at its best.

*ka: sî yamabayi con pre'yam ta lo lo*

Thy love casts out all fear of death, and makes  
Us see the truth about our life, the round  
Of earthly incarnations, the illusive chain  
That binds us to the wheel of time, the ever—  
Recurring cycle of our coming and going,  
Our birth and dying.

Thy love doth give one-pointedness and true  
Direction to our outward wills, desires, thoughts—  
The restless curvettings and champings of the mind.  
So may we break the untamed horse to the rein,  
And ride it on to our goal.

Thy grace vouchsafes us the Vision Splendid,  
When truth becomes an overpowering knowledge,  
Integral to our being, a direct perception  
That cannot be denied, and sets all doubt at rest.

The eight *siddhis* are his for the asking,  
But bent on seeing none other than Thee,  
Thy devotee looks on them with indifference.  
Knowing their worth, what cares he for them?

He would not rest content with aught  
But the Most high, the All-Perfect. So he attains  
To the unitive life, and all his sense and mind  
Conflicts resolved, he goes to Peace.

He knows all; there's nought for him to know,  
Nor aught unknown to him; nothing to hide,  
Nor aught to speak. No sour or sweet for him,  
No pleasure nor pain. He hath attained to equipoise.

Would you this blissful state of being desire,  
Trust not your mortal flesh as your immortal dower.  
It needs discipline hard, it must be told:  
'Mortal thou art and thy portion is death'.  
You cannot at the target arrow shoot  
Until its tip of steel flashing forth  
Strikes it deep unerringly. Know that  
You cannot string the precious pearl until  
Each single bead is bored.



Slay your petty self and cast out fear  
Of death and mundane fears. Renounce all codes  
Prescribed, all ritual and rules of *Varnāshrama*,  
Of castes and creeds. Then know the Self: Therein  
Your profit lies. Realise in thought and word  
And deed that 'Thou art That'.

You may read the *Vedas* and *Purana*-s all,  
Get at the truth of all that you may read.  
And your allotted tasks perform, yet cling not to ego;  
Say not, "'Tis I do this,'tis I do that'.  
So shall the Lord take up your works and lead  
You swift and sure across the shoreless sea  
Of ignorance, dark and deep.

Words are not deeds, nor will you live in God,  
if you recite the scripture texts by day and night.  
Give up ego and attachments all;  
Nor be content with the learned lore of holy books.  
Realise the truth as part of your being.  
Mere meditation will not lead you far,  
Surrender yourself to Lord, and your  
Ego renounce. There is no other way.

Once awaked, love cannot be confined within,  
But must ooze out and fret to find itself  
Without, its correspondence in the love of man  
And nature, which it shall everywhere find.  
Then love within shall flow without,  
And gushing and gurgling in a whirligig of joy,  
The bubbling founts of love shall dance and play.  
Exalted thus, united with the love of all,  
What cares Thy devotee how the world regards  
Him or what it says? He is indifferent  
To all its praise and blame.

Having attained to Supreme Bliss, O Paramanand,  
 Disdain not to walk the lowly ways of life;  
 But act your parts on the earthly stage,  
 And don whatever robes will suit the various parts  
 That you must play, intent on spiritual good  
 Not worldly gain; in non-possession rich,  
 And this your means to sail across the sea  
 Of shoals and storms. Rest not nor stay behind  
 Even for a breathing spell. Strive on to reach the Goal.

## 5

Paramanand's significant contribution, however, consists not in his shorter poems but in his three longer poems, *Rādhāsvyamvara*, *Sudāmacarita*, and *Siva Lagan*. Of these three, the first is the most musical, it has abandon and gaiety of mood; and containing about 30 songs, it is very nearly related to *lila*-lyrics in its tone and treatment. Indeed, it is a lyrical narrative; the poet finds it difficult to restrain his own emotion while describing the sport or *lila* of Radha and Krishna and cannot but burst into song. Very few of these 30 songs are, structurally, a part of the narrative. The internal evidence of style, mood and treatment relates it to an earlier period, to a time of comparative buoyancy of youth. *Sudāmacarita* is a more mature work, more objective in its treatment; it has only two songs which, in their theme, are intimately related to the theme of the narrative. What is more, it has restraint, the poet is master of his emotion; there is economy of language, and the allegory is more organic. The poet feels less often the need of making his comments to draw out the spiritual truth of the allegory from the incidents of the narrative. *Siva Lagan* is a later composition. It is less musical than both these poems, experiments with an unusual and difficult rhyme; but it is not quite fair to



say that it 'has only a language interest for the reader', as has been said by Zinda Kaul.

Each of these three narrative poems has the unity of a great mystical idea, the love of man for God and of God for man. The allegory or myth in each of them controls the various incidents and gives them a structural unity. *Rādhāśvyaṃvara* tells the story of Radha's choice of her spouse, Krishna. The poet sets himself the difficult task of telling the story 'yatha: vath', that is, faithfully. He describes the childhood of Radha, her pranks and gambols with other Gopa maids and her love for Krishna and Krishna's love for her, and the celebration of their marriage. All this is told with a sense of joy in the telling. There are faithful pictures of rural households and communities as Paramanad knew from his surroundings. The conclusion of the poem, as the conclusion of a story, is not effective as that of the other two poems. Other incidents like that of Rukmani are brought in at the end which distract the mind somewhat from the main theme.

*Sudāmacarita* has a noble opening followed by a sonorous beadroll of names and attributes of Sri Krishna as *Avatar*; and moves on to describe the significant events of his life, the episodes of Krishnāvatārlila. It begins

gati manza gaash aav caane ze'nay  
jay jay, jay jay Devakinandanay  
ni:tishakti su':ty chukh naanaa ru':pay  
khi:ra samudra manza she:ta du': pay  
vaasu'devamwakha be'yi shankarshanay  
pre'dyamna anirwada shwada nyarmalay  
syadu' bwadu' vyadu' nyada shwabu' mangalay  
zan kavú zaanu'nay tse' nyaranzanay . . .

These are sanskrit names but used as they are pronounced in Kashmiri. Here are a first few stanzas from which

the volatile essence of poetry has, I doubt not, evaporated in my translation:

From darkness came out light when thou wast born,  
Hail, hail to thee, O Devaki's Joy, all hail!  
Manifest in myriad forms by Law  
Divine of Shakti's might, thou art the lord  
Of life that dwells in all that lives, the All—  
Pervading and Eternal Spirit in  
The Primal Matter and the soul of man.  
Thou art Energy, Light, Perfect, Pure,  
All-wise, Awake, Auspicious and the Good,  
And All-containing Treasure Thou. How can  
Men know the Undefined-By-Qualities,  
The Formless and the Indescribable? . . . .  
For thieving milk Yashoda scolded thee.  
Not knowing thee, the lord of the worlds, 'Open',  
She said, 'your mouth, you naughty child'. And lo!  
Behold, she saw the whole universe inside.  
Crawling about, the meek wise child went forth  
To steal the milk. From all sides noises came  
And milkmaids all complained: 'He broke my pots,  
And mine, and mine, and mine, and mine', they cried.  
And cried Yashoda too: 'You cause me pain,  
You humble me and make me feel ashamed,  
Voracious child, you ever-hungry child.'  
Scolded thus, you ran away and she  
Ran after you, a halter in her hand.  
'I will', she thought, 'now bind him with the rope'.  
He whom no painter can portray, whom *jnaan* and  
*Dyaan* can never bind, who can be bound  
By him alone whose heart is pure and kind,  
Eluded being caught, though running round  
A small compound. Tired and out of breath  
She gave up the fruitless chase. The son was moved



As for his devotees is moved the Lord.  
 And offered he himself for being caught.  
 She tied the halter round his waist, it proved  
 Too short. Then halters to countless halters tied.  
 They proved too short for him whose neck adorned  
 Is with *Kustabha* garlands measureless  
 Of universes infinite. Who can  
 Recount thy wondrous deeds; who can indeed  
 Describe the Spirit Immanent?

The story of Sudāma is told at length and takes about one and a half times more space than all the other episodes of Krishnāvatarlila. From the very first line,

Sudāmjiva os yaar Bhagavaanas

(Sudāmjiva was the friend of Krishna, the Lord)  
 to about the very end—

Sudām raaza bo'v panu'nis na'gras

(Sudāma became the king of his own city)—there is not a superfluous line; the verse moves unhindered and even; and we share the sorrow, hope and joy of Sudāma without being weighted down with the allegory. The allegory is there all the time but unobtrusively, and enriches rather than takes away from the interest of the story. The conflict in the mind of Sudāma, his doubt, hesitation and shyness are subtly revealed as also the encouragement he receives from his wife, Sushīla, of the right intuition; and the poem moves on to a crisis which is resolved in a denouement. The diction throughout is smooth and simple but sinewy.

*Siva Lagan* (The Marriage of Siva) tells the story of the self-immolation of Sati, her rebirth as the daughter of King Himalaya, and her marriage with Siva. The poet treats with a gentle irony the comical bustling about

and self-created importance of the priest go-between, his hardly concealed anxiety for money (*dakshina*) and a hearty meal, as also the uncouth first appearance of Siva himself as the bridegroom, all lending a local atmosphere to the wedding. There are, besides, fine descriptive touches of the frost glazing the winter snows and of the glacial vastnesses of Siva's abode. There is also a deeper nuance of allegory in the poem besides the obvious one of the quest of the human soul for God. For unless Shakti manifests Siva, unless there is the Becoming (Sakti), Siva, undifferentiated and pure Being, would remain unknown. We worship God as Woman for we place Sakti above the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, who are but the palanquin-bearers of the Devi. There is, besides, no antagonism between them: they are not jealous of each other as, I understand, Siva and Vishnu have been here in the south. To gain boons from both, the devout amongst us, Saivas or Shāktās, know that they must worship her; for you cannot by-pass her, she is, *ardhapallavitashankara-rūpamudra*, and, indeed, none other than Siva Himself. We know that we cannot know Siva except through her, as a *sloka* of our popular Sanskrit *Pancastavi* puts it.

अज्ञातसम्भवमनाकलि तान्वायं  
 भिक्षुं कपालिनमवासासमद्वितीयम्  
 पूर्वं करग्रहणमङ्गलतो भवत्याः  
 पूभुं क एव वुबुधे गिरिराजकन्ये ।

(Of parentage and ancestry unknown;  
 Without a family, race or caste;  
 Unborn, His birth and breed and blood unknown;  
 A naked wandering mendicant;  
 A human skull His only ornament;



Alone, without a second—  
Who would know Siva, O Parvati,  
Before you granted Him the favour of  
Giving your hand in marriage unto Him.

6

Paramanand's contribution to Kashmiri poetry can be fully estimated only if we understand his use of myth, symbol and allegory in his poems, notably in the three longer poems. A poet, a mystic poet certainly, has to speak in myth and symbol. I sometimes feel that modern poetry, even English poetry, only flits and glints; it does not soar or shine with steady light. It merely sparkles. Old myths no longer move or interest us and we have not succeeded in creating new ones. That is why, exceptions apart, we write clever poems, not great poetry. However that be, Paramanand, in his shorter poems, does not choose his symbols arbitrarily, nor does he press into service what tradition has already invested with symbolic meaning like *sāki* and *jaam*, rose and nightingale, or lotus and the serpent. On the contrary, he takes common things, objects of daily use in farming or familiar events in a farmer's life, and makes of them a natural symbol, giving them a significance which, by their very nature, so to say, they could bear. So we find that discrimination becomes a ploughshare; field of action, a farm; spiritual *sādhana*, ploughing the farm; and well-known stages of a pilgrimage stand for stages in the pilgrim's progress. His diction is not strained, never stilted, not drawn from book-learning but racy of the soil and rich in metaphor. 'This is the skill', says George Herbert, 'when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushel, leaven, boys piping and dancing; showing that the things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way

of drudgery, but to be washed and cleaned, and serve for lights even of Heavenly truths'.

In his longer poems, generally speaking, the narrative is the thing. It moves from episode to episode, scattering a wealth of descriptive touches, of phrase and imagery; and then suddenly there is a little word, often a metaphor, even a pun, sometimes a verse of comment, and the larger, the cosmic, significance comes with the force of revelation. This is almost everywhere in these longer poems, and I need only refer, as an instance, to the episode in *Rādhāśvayamvara* where the poet describes the stealing of Gopis' clothes at the Jamuna Ghat by the child Krishna. To get them back, they have to stand naked before him. For, to come to the Lord, says the poet, we have to renounce all egoism and sense of shame; we have to stand naked before our God. In *Sudāmacarita* the poet narrates how the Gopa women came running after the infant Krishna complaining: 'He breaks my milkpots, and mine, and mine', said they. Feeling mortified at these complaints, Yashoda, his mother, runs after him with a cow's halter in her hand to bind him with. The child eludes her every time and even in the confined limits of a compound, she cannot get at him. But when she is tired and gives up the chase, the son is moved to pity ('as God towards his devotees'), and he surrenders himself. The parenthetic line by the poet at once illumines the episode with a mystic meaning. God steals the milk of devotion for his hunger is insatiable; Buddhi tries to bind and delimit God but mere learning cannot help her even to form an image of Him and, even though He is within the narrow confines of her own heart, she cannot get at him. But before a devotee, a *bhakta*, God surrenders Himself. All this the poet does not say in so many words but there it is in the flash of that



parenthesis. Sometimes it is a single word that invests a whole passage with such significance. In a very melodious and ecstatic verse.

Vra'ts myaani gu:piyi tse'y pata laaraan  
bansaree naada vaada mataano  
na'shrith hyas ta hosh ma'shrith par ta paana  
tsyatha vyamarshi diptimaana bagawaanao

Every movement of my mind,  
a Gopi running after Thee,  
drawn, like mad, by the call  
of thy magic flute,  
oblivious of sense-objects and  
distinctions, mine and thine.

Here the call of the flute is not merely a *naad*, a call, but a *vaad*, a provocation; and the jiva cannot disregard it. God knows the value of jiva, for he is as much a lover of man as man is of God. Sudāma has not yet reached the gates of the palace at Dwarika but Sri Krishna has already made preparations to receive him: 'We expect Sudāma today. Shouldn't this make us proud and happy?' he is saying to Rukmani. While, sometimes, the allegory does, to an extent, smother his shorter poems, *Yātrā* and *Karmabhūmika*, it is a marvel that Paramanand has succeeded in saving his longer poems, the story as well as the poetry of them, from what could have been the stifling effect of allegory.

## 7

This brings us to the last group of his shorter poems, the fruits of his lifelong *sādhana* which 'read like the meditations of a *jivanmukta*'. In them he speaks of his experiences with the conviction of *siddhanta*-s or self-evident truths, in a language which, under the stress of

thought, becomes aphoristic, sometimes not easy to interpret. Of the style of this group of poems, their rare mystic insight, a good example is *sahaza vyatsaar* (Sans. *sahaja vica:r*): Permit me, Gentlemen, to try to give you a feel of how his verse reads, its sound and style, even though you do not know the language.

gindunaah chu zindu'marun  
 sa haz vyatsaar karun  
 sa hazas praav patshe  
 sham ta dam naav gatshe  
 paanu'ro'st paan swarun . . .  
 veedav chu vo'nmutuy  
 vidyav vani o'nmutuy  
 vye'di nishi tshyo'nmutuy . . .  
 Shakt vo'nhas ta Shivay  
 zaav kas ta aavu'gavay  
 ne'shdyan shashravay . . .  
 sat-tsyath anandu'maye  
 vaa'tith mwayi mwaye  
 pra':vith yas na mwaye . . .  
 vaara ye'li vuchzi mandar  
 roozy-zi na ta'thy andar  
 andu'vand Sha:mu'swandar . . .  
 vatshu' tra':vith ta daare  
 yor zaani tor laare  
 tas vyan kyaazi laare  
 sa haz vyatsaar karun

To seek unity with God is to venture forth  
 and hazard all, to experience death in life  
 And be re-born to the higher Self within.  
 Not by control of mind and senses but  
 Renouncing self and ever intent, you will  
 Come to the selfless Self by faith devout.  
 Known by the knowers blest, the Vedas speak



Of him beyond the prescribed paths. He shines  
 On all that is as doth the glorious sun,  
 Undying and unborn. As Sakti known  
 To some, to some as Siva, He is the Ground  
 Of all, as Being, Bliss and Consciousness,  
 And yet aloof, untouched by everything . . .  
 This inmost Sanctum seen, shut not yourself  
 Within, for God is everywhere without.  
 Throw open all sense-gates and let the mind  
 Go where it will. It cannot go where God is not.

I hope I have said enough about Paramanand's diction (poetry is written with words, obviously) drawn from the speech of his day, and about the symbols he employs which are not personified abstractions of vices and virtues but concrete figures from the epics whom thousands of years have made familiar to us and who have become a part of our race consciousness. From the original fragments that I have quoted, you may have had some idea of the abundance of poetic devices, rhymes, end-rhymes and medial rhymes, alliterations and assonances that came to him naturally and unbidden. I have also spoken of the great myths, the fables, (for poetry is ideas too and words have not only sound but also meaning)—the myth and allegory that gives his longer poems their form and architectonics. His poems, in the order in which I have placed them here, are, to my mind, his spiritual biography, and reveal the growth of the poet's mind as well as the mystic's *sadhana* and self-realisation. At their best, his poems have the qualities of ecstasy and vision; and when this so, his speech is inspired, it flows with spontaneity and bears the convincing stamp of his spiritual experience, his *anubhava*. That is why I consider Paramanand a significant poet with the accent of greatness in some of his poems.

J. L. KAUL

## MODERN KASHMIRI LITERATURE

The word 'modern' in the title of this lecture has two dictionary meanings: (1) of the present and recent time; and (2) new-fashioned, not antiquated (*COD*). I shall use the word in both these meanings, I hope, without mixing them up; and I shall speak of Kashmiri literature, not poetry only, of the present century, emphasising, however, what is modern in it, as against what is regarded as antiquated and medieval. But literary movements do not blaze forth or fade out all on a sudden. They dovetail one into another; and the date-wise division of literary periods or ages is only a division of convenience. That is why, when the other day I spoke of the 'antiquated' forms of Kashmiri poetry, its *masnavi*-s and *lila* narratives, I had to make a mention of several works of this kind which continued to be written even in the 'modern' period of our literature during the first quarter of the present century. And, that is why, when I am speaking of modern Kashmiri literature, I have to go back to the last quarter of the 19th century, if not earlier, to trace its beginnings to a time when the antiquated medieval literary art-forms were in vogue.

It is generally accepted that modern or resurgent India came into being when, in the beginning of the 19th century, it broke away from its medieval moorings, its unquestioning faith in religious scriptures, in the validity of custom and smug social values, its scholastic learning, dependence on and submission to authority and its intellectual apathy and inertia. It is, however, often forgotten or, at least, not clearly brought out that in the vast country



that is India, the resurgence could not be simultaneous; and nearly a century had to pass before the impact of English, the main vehicle and instrument of the new learning and resurgence, could be felt in the peripheral provinces of the, then, Punjab and the North West Frontier and Jammu and Kashmir State. The impact of the West, its literature, science and social studies, was late in coming to Kashmir, later than to the Punjab, delaying the stimulus it had given to the modern literary 'renaissance' elsewhere in India.

It was only by about 1885 that Kashmir began to emerge into the modern age. In that year, the third Dogra ruler, Maharaja Pratap Singh, ascended the throne, and the British diplomacy, both force and fraud, succeeded in bringing the State firmly under the suzerainty of the Viceroy. The Valley was opened up by means of a metalled highway and post and telegraph, connecting it with the Punjab via Murree and Rawalpindi, 200 miles away, and later via Jammu with Sialkot, 226 miles from Srinagar. About this time 'state' schools were set up in which Urdu and even Hindi began to be taught along with Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit; and Urdu was made the medium of instruction, English being taught only in the C.M.S. schools. Gradually, however, English began to be taught in all schools and it was adopted at the higher levels of administration as the official language instead of Persian. With the use of the new languages in schools and offices, the hold of Persian weakened but its place was not taken by the indigenous languages of the people in the Punjab, Sindh, N.W.F.P. and Kashmir, where Urdu overshadowed them and unduly retarded their modern development. How belated the impact of English was on Kashmiri can be gauged by the fact that it was only in 1911 that S. P. College, the premier institution

for higher education in the State, produced its first batch of four graduates.

Though the beginnings may be traced to an earlier time, it was by the year 1925 that the modern age had definitely arrived both in our socio-political history as well as in Kashmiri literature. In 1925, Maharaja Pratap Singh died, bringing to a close the feudal or personal rule in Kashmir. The form of government, already modernised in its administrative set-up, no longer commanded the acquiescence of the people; and the impact of the Non-Co-operation Movement began to be felt. The dissatisfaction of the people and their new urges came to be reflected, albeit in a cautious, veiled manner, in the literature of the new age. The traditionalist, however, continued to write in the traditional way. They wrote masnavis in the old *hazaj* metre and sufi ghazals and *N'at* in praise of the Holy Prophet of Islam, as by Sat Ram and Anand Ram of Traal. Abdul Ahad Nadim of Bandipore, our best *N'at* poet, wrote eulogiums in praise of the Holy Prophet which are charged with a rare passion of devotion and faith, often strikingly illumined with allusions from the Holy Koran. There were other, and more contemporary, traditional poets: (a) Sufi poets, Samad Mir (d. 1959) and, perhaps the last of the genre, Ahad Zargar, both of whom, however, in their diction and imagery, homely and original and untrammelled by the stale stock diction of Persian, strike a refreshingly new note. And (b) writers of ghazals and narratives: Shams-ud-din Hairat, who died last year; and Daya Ram Ganju, whose language is remarkably free from the unassimilable Persian and who turns to a theme, unused and new, namely, that of exhorting us to break our isolation, bring about social reform, and put to use our own tongue, 'sweet and rich and expressive'. Sometime earlier Abdul



Gafar Fārigh (d. 1925), had written satires and didactic poems against the evil customs of the day and translated the Urdu *Mussadas-i-Hali*, which hearkened Muslims to bestir themselves, reminding them of their past glory. By and large, however, the age of the antiquated medieval literary art-forms, *masnavi*-s and *lila* narratives, may be said to have ended with the death of Krishna Razdan in 1925 and, soon after in 1928, of Aziz Ullah Haqqani and, even earlier, of some of our well-known Sufi poets of the preceding age. The ghazal, already acclimatised in Kashmiri, and the old *vatsan* form continued but largely with a new diction and modern content.

## 2

From 1925 to 1948 it is certainly the age of Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor (1885-1952), who not only became the most popular but came to be recognised as the representative poet of the new literary urges of the time. He recovered much of the melody native to the tongue, retrieved it from the false 'rekhta', 'plastered and stock language' of the masnavi poets, and, what is more significant, introduced new themes in which we may indubitably discern the modern note. His predecessors had lavished their poetic ingenuity on embellishing the exotic beloveds of classical Persian, Laila and Zulaikha, 'Azra and Shirin, but Mahjoor discovered the faery of Qāf (Caucasus) in a country lass of the Valley:

Thou Bouquet of the Meadow Flowers,  
Thou Heavenly Hīmāl, thou Peri of Qāf,  
Thou Pitcher of Wine, thou Kārtik Moon,  
O Country lass, O Sweet, O Dear!

Throughout his life, his poems, sometimes obliquely, mirror the new stirrings of the time.

*'vanda tsali, shi:n gali, be'yi yiyi bahaar'*

The winter will pass,  
The snows will melt,  
The spring will come again.

But, when occasion demands, he can be direct and forthright as, when in 1938, the Muslim Conference turned itself into National Conference, he sounded the clarion call in a famous poem.:

*'vo'lo haa baagwaano nav bahaaruk shaan paide kar  
phwalan gul gath karan bulbul tithuy saamaan  
paide kar ...'*

Come, gardener, we will create  
The splendour of a new spring.  
Let roses bloom again  
And bulbuls sing of love again.

The garden in ruins,  
The dew in tears,  
The rose in tattered leaf.  
Let us rekindle life anew  
In roses and bulbuls.

Nettle and thistle choke the garden roses  
Come, let us weed them out, for look!  
Hyacinths are crowding at the gate.

O bulbul, wailings are in vain;  
Whoever will set you free?  
Your own salvation you must work  
With your own hands alone.

Birds of the garden sing their songs,  
Each one striking his own note.  
O Lord, unite their diverse notes  
Into one rousing song.



Would you arouse this habitat  
Of roses and bulbuls,  
Bring thunder, storm and tempest wild,  
Yea, an earthquake.

And, when soon after freedom, disenchantment came  
to sensitive men and women, Mahjoor poured withering  
scorn in the poems of his last days.

Freedom, a heavenly *houri*.

Will not move about with all and sundry.

That is why she is flirting with

The select few in mansions of the rich.

Mahjoor's younger contemporary, Abdul Ahad Azad,  
who died young on April 19, 1948, was more radical  
and forthright in his condemnation of the *status quo*.

He made a definite break with the past:

Different are my theme, song and music;

Different my tavern, flask and wine-cup . . .

Your God is the God of mosques and temples;

My God is the God of love and brotherhood.

They are clever conjurors who keep on show

The K'aba and the idol-house.

He is a poet of universal sympathies, of the under-dog  
and all-round revolution. His *Da'rya* (The River) is a  
symbol of life, of continuous change and onward rush,  
of hazards and unceasing quest. He also wrote *Shikva-  
-i-Iblis* (Satan's Complaint) which was a new thing. It  
was, like his *D'arya*, a *nazm*, a poem longer than the  
ghazal, with a unity of theme and the theme was boldly  
revolutionary, questioning God's sense of fairness and  
His Wisdom.

Long ages passed since you expelled me from  
Heaven where I refused to make obeisance  
To man. It was a pretext found by you

To condemn me eternally to Hell.  
 My only sin was self-respect: I would  
 Not bow to anyone but you, much less  
 To man risen from dust, fragile and weak.  
 Nor are you fair to him whom you have sent  
 To fight Satan and create this pother  
 Of *Kufr* and *Di:n*, and make the fright of Hell  
 And horror of judgment-day operate thy world.

Other, and younger, poets wrote on the new themes like  
 'the Kashmiri Craftsman', complaining of the capitalist  
 exploitation by Beg Arif or *Krāla Ku:r* (Potter's Daughter)  
 by Fāzil and *Kanadu:r* (Ear-rings) by Ambārdār, passion-  
 ately romantic descriptions yet free from the sterile stock  
 diction. *Kanadu:r*, for instance, slight but pretty and  
 new.

I have ear-rings to sell,  
 Some red, some blue, some pink.  
 Let love and beauty meet  
 To make the most of life.  
*Come buy, come buy, come buy.*

I have ear-rings to sell,  
 Precious, pretty, and fine;  
 Beneath the flowing locks  
 They shine as jewels shine.  
 Come as quick as the larks  
 Round fragrant basil flock.  
 They cost a winsome smile.  
*Come buy, come buy, come buy.*  
 I bought them from love's mart  
 In beauty's bazaar to sell.  
 In their prime of youth  
 Let maidens flock to buy  
 The lovely ear-rings.  
*Come buy, come buy, come buy.*



They are love's offerings  
They are for lovely maids,  
They have a mighty charm,  
They lure the lover's heart.  
*Come buy, come buy, come buy.*

Make haste to buy ear-rings,  
This is the time to buy;  
This is the time to love.  
Soon autumn will set in,  
When flowers will fade away,  
And love will be forgot.  
*Come buy, come buy, come buy.*

The modern note, in a profounder sense, is sounded by Zinda Kaul (1884-1965), a note of doubt and interrogation which calls into question the social and religious certitudes that were once the unquestioned moral support and bases of stability for society.

Christ promises Heaven to the hungry pious.

'A fine place indeed it must be', they think;

'But does it really exist?' they ask.

Zinda Kaul gave to Kashmiri verse some new rhyme-patterns and stanza forms, both regular and irregular; and he succeeded in freeing it from the imitative forms prevalent till his day. There is a deep questioning in regard to the problem of evil and suffering; and Zinda Kaul uncovers a new depth, a new dimension, not known before to Kashmiri poetry:

'Is love an idle fancy?

Is beauty a vain illusive show?'

Even the mystic poets had only revealed their insights of a world where these questions had no relevance. In his devotional poems in which he speaks of his longing for God and spiritual quest, he has given a new direction,

away from the prevailing style and theme of the *lila* songs. In oblique but richly suggestive symbolism and imagery, he expresses this longing as in his poem *Vanan Manz Laal* (Gems in Deserts) where he has a priceless vision of

A mystic afflatus passing from heart to heart,  
Where fleshly eyes of man intervene not  
Between two lovers . . . Herein he realized  
How priceless is the heart of man, and lo!  
God is love's luminous flame within  
The heart; for God chose His abode in love  
When man was made, and love its dwelling found  
Where grief was great, in the heart of the sorrowing  
man.

God is the Hound of Heaven. He is man's lover from eternity and pursues him and seeks him out.

For we may turn away from Him,  
But will He let us go?

But He is long-suffering and finding man unprepared, He would rather wait than take him unawares. One night, says he in *Naatayaa'ri* (unpreparedness)

It was the last watch of the night, the wan  
Late-rising moon with pale light suffused  
The sky, and flowers their fragrance breathed into  
The air. The hum of space and murmur of  
The stream merged in the silence of the night,  
And subtler music made. The oriole sang  
And, faint and far away, the starling spoke,  
And pollen-laden breeze gently stirred.

A sense of mystery pulsated all  
Around and expectation filled the air.  
'Had my eternal lover come?' I asked.

'Had my beloved uninvited come?'  
How would he feel to find me unprepared?



I have no room to seat him in. What should  
 Have been a shrine into a store-room I  
 Had turned, and filled with worthless household junk  
 And dusty pots and pans; with worldly cares  
 My mind so crowded that no room was left  
 For love. With loving-kindness I had not  
 My neighbours served nor shared my joys with  
 them . . . .

Feeling ashamed, humiliated and,  
 Exposed, I wished that I could hide or die.  
 So that he would not see me in this plight.

It was not he. Would he put me to shame?  
 No, he would rather wait than me expose.  
 My lover from eternity will wait.

As illustrative of Zinda Kaul's poetry, its doubt and  
 interrogation as well as the certitude and faith founded in  
 the testimony of his heart, I may quote from his poem  
*Vadihe Manash* (Man would weep) in translation.

vadihe manush ce'yihe na o'sh  
 vadanash vuchun ta:'si:r kyaah  
 ha':rith a'chiv kiny khu:n kyaah  
 cha':vith palan su':ty hi:r kyaah  
 bu:zith zi bozaan chum na kaanh  
 far'y-yaad karnu'c zi:r kyaah  
 la':yith nabas yim ti:r kyaah  
 majbu:riyaah laaca':riyaah

Man would weep,  
 He would not gulp down his tears;  
 But what availed it him to shed his tears?  
 What availed it him to drop blood from his eyes?  
 What availed it him to beat his head against a rock?  
 Knowing that none heeds him,  
 What drives him on still to sue for help?

What drives him on to shoot his darts at the void?  
What compulsion! What helplessness!

Man momentarily dying—

By hunger, cold and thirst oppressed,  
By disease distressed, by worry harassed,  
By fear and want and woe subdued.

These sorrows over, by a hundred desires beguiled,  
His unsteady mind not finding rest in anything here,  
Still craves for a something, though unknown.

The Good not seen by him, nor known by him,  
He yet would find as something lost,  
Which he possessed before—

Like one who wakes with memory dim  
Of the taste of wine he had in a dream.

What misery—between want and desire!

Someone, they say, decried from afar  
The sheen of His halo, in another time.

This our ears have heard,  
This our hearts have believed;

And we pine for Him

As for our Love offended and displeased  
Who has fled and hid himself in solitude.

Lovesickness for no reason,  
Lovesickness nought availeth.

Keeping aloof, in concealment far away,  
To all entreaties deaf,  
His ears as if stuffed up with cotton wool,  
Does He ever enquire for us?

Does He ever think of us, ever ask:

‘Whom I have cast, mid darkness black,  
On precipices steep, in forests thick,  
What has befallen them?

Beauty’s wanton indifference.



Man pleaded with his heart:  
'He has no love, why sue to Him?  
Will a willow tree yield you a pear?  
Know you the path that leads to Him?  
What means of approach have you found?'  
But his mind—would it listen?  
Would it turu back?  
(And who can chain the wind?)  
And how is mind to blame?  
Is love an idle fancy?  
Is beauty a vain illusive show?...

What bewilderment!  
What resistless urge!  
What misery—between want and desire!...

Kashmiri has its stock descriptive diction; but Zinda Kaul had an eye for fresh details and discovered new beauties; the white turbans of the pear-tree blossom, the hum of space in the silence of night, the refreshing greenery of the willows in spring, and the like. His poems are rich in assonance and skilful rhymes; a few of his ghazals are among the best we have; and he has a gentle humanitarian sentiment and a quiet but deep meditative quality and poignant thought.

I have attempted to say that these poets of 1925 and later gave a new direction to our poetry, exploring new themes and moods; and even when the form is old as also the symbol; the thought or idea is new and modern.

### 3

Then came the forties with their storm and stress which found effective and direct expression in drama. More than any other literary art-form, drama presents not only the soul but also the very body of the stirring

times; and the playwright utilized the stage as a powerful means of placing before the people the problems of the day in an audio-visual form. Nand Lal Kaul had already shown the way in the second decade of the century in giving us adaptations in Kashmiri of Hindu-stani plays of Agha Hashar Kashmiri. The playwrights of the forties gave us more plays, from Hindu mythology and *the Mahabharata*; and, after the Raid in 1947, came political plays like *Shahid Sherwani* (The Martyr Sherwani who was cruelly done to death by the Pakistan raiders); *Tre' Bata Tsor* (Three-fourths), the landlord's exorbitant share of the produce; *Dollar Saheb*, the imperialist machinations; and many more. There were translations from Ibsen and Tagore, domestic plays and 'flood' plays and attempts at reviving the old folk theatre (called *Baandjashn*), and several operas and radio plays. The most memorable operatic play still unmatched for its poetry and deeply moving music evolved out of folk tunes, its richly meaningful theme, well-knit plot, and the totality of effect, is Dina Nath Nadim's *Bombur Ye'm, bu'rzal*; and the most popular radio plays have been Pushkar Bhan's humorous serial, *Machāma* plays, bordering on the burlesque. Some of its popular successes notwithstanding, it must be said that Kashmiri drama is yet to make its mark. Most of the plays indulge in slogan-mongering and public speaking. Their realism does not see into the psychology, the inner tension of character nor do they show understanding of the deeper conflicts of the time.

Though its beginnings can be traced to the last century even to the translation into Kashmiri of the New Testament in 1821 in sharada script by the Serampore missionaries, functional prose is really the gift of the forties, and Radio Kashmir has contributed most to its development.



It was as late as 1948 that the State Government interested itself with the 'perfecting' of the Kashmiri script, that is, adapting the Perso-Arabic alphabet with necessary modifications. Skits and stories, plays, features and sketches had to be put on the air; humour, satire, irony and sarcasm had to be pressed into service in propaganda programmes; narrative, expository and emotive prose developed over the years in the literary programmes of 'Sangarmaal' and 'Pamposh'. Prose was practised in the columns of journals like *Kwangposh* (The Saffron Flower), *Gulrez* (The Rose Petal), *Pamposh* (The Lotus), *T'ameer* (The Build), *Son Adab* (Our Literature), and *Sheerza* (The Forum). Some of these contain articles of research and literary criticism; and prose began to have conciseness, verve and structural coherence.

More than all this, the creative prose literature of the time found its expression in the short story. Several collections of short stories were published, and Padma Shri Akhtar Mohi-ud-din's *Sathsangar* (Seven Hill-tops) deservedly won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958. There are in it stories of atmosphere, of mind's inner working, memorable situations, realist portrayal of life and social sensibility; there is suspense and dramatic effect. Akhtar's diction and idiom are remarkable for freshness and racy piquant flavour. He has given us some unforgettable characters, revealing essential humanity where we least expect it, among the uncultured scavengers, who form the rude scum of society. The stories in other collections too have enriched the denotation of Kashmiri short story and present a varied fare. Romance in a poor home, psychological study of exploited labour (in *Tsu'ni Tsoor*, The Charcoal Thief); an unforgettable 'bazaar' character, Maal Ded; an atmosphere of horror and a sense of overpowering fate; life's little surprises, grim hospital

stories (of Dr Shankar Raina); unrepentent cynicism (of Hriday Bharati's *Shikast*, Defeat), and the uniformly successful stories of Amin Kamil's book, *Kathi Maniz Kath*, giving us memorable characterisation of Shāhmāl and Jaanabits the Skinny (in *Kwakarjang*, The Cockfight); the terrible satire on the Government of the day (in *Jahnami*, The Reprobate); a study of an old man's re-awakened love (in A':nu', The Mirror)—all this and much more is there in them. Our short stories have made the grade and deserve a place, on their merit, in any anthology of Modern Indian short stories. But not so the few novels we have except Akhtar's short novel, *Dod Dag* (Sickness and Pain). The suffering and humiliation of two orphan sisters, very subtly and unobtrusively deepen our understanding of a socio-economic milieu, cruel, ignorant and petty, and its mores and values. The author has a grip on character; and the complexity of characters is revealed as situations develop and the plot thickens and, what is significant, the characters and events interact on one another. The characters, all of them, are individualized, human and recognisable. Even, the seemingly descriptive interludes, like the *Shikara* ride in the Lake, are structurally connected with the story, and further the plot. For instance (the translation is as literal as I could make it):

'It was noon and sunlight shot through the limpid waters of Dal Lake, weaving a pattern of stairways that seemed to descend to the very bottom. Small fish swam in rows, now hiding themselves in water weeds, now peeping out on the surface. They themselves appeared very playful, reminding one of the dear toddlers playing hide and seek in their kindergartens. At some distance the lotus on the azure waters touched by sunrays sparkled like stars on the sapphire sky and drops of water on their



broad green petals scintillated like pearl on plates of jade. The willows, their branches thick with newly sprouted leaves, waved gently and rhythmically as if country lasses were dancing a *rohv* dance on the shores of the lake; while all around stood tall mountain peaks enveloped in bright cumulus clouds as if the tribal patriarchs were watching their grand-children and great grand-children, so many of them, and smiling a smile of serene satisfaction.

'Faata had only one thought coming to her again and again: "Would God that I were cured of this fell disease!" But Raaja was young and healthy, and the beauty of the scene awakened her youth. Her veil dropped to her shoulders, revealing her long raven locks; and she realized as keenly as never before that her husband was an old widower while she was young—young to be the spouse, say (and why not?), of Abdul Gani. The thought made her blush. She stole a look at Abdul Gani, who was casting lovelorn stealthy glances at her. And she felt pleased.'

#### 4

The earlier enthusiasm of the forties and early fifties soon were off; and, while socialism in a vague undefined sense was still in the air, the writers ceased to be largely occupied with socio-political propaganda, angry polemical verse and patriotic sentimentalities. There is less declamation of emotional commonplaces and the writers shed much of the rhetoric aimed at winning audiences. There is a deeper insight into things, the tone is less assertive and the poets' receptivity more thoughtful. The themes are no longer merely topical; there is a good deal of technical virtuosity and experimenting with verse patterns, irregular and free verse, and stanza schemes.

There is also a search for new forms like the sonnet, and for new imagery to replace the old 'literary lumber' of poetry, its vague emotions and inchoate vocabulary. The short story writers particularly, exposed the seamy side of life, the loosening of the family grip and of the old acceptances of private and social life. They observed, with satiric humour, the replacing of the old landed classes, and the brash behaviour of the *nouveau riche* and the new leaders. They began to express their disenchantment with those in whom they had in their youthful idealism, put their trust; and the poets turned sceptical, even bitter:

Our leaders prayed to other gods,  
But God is good and prayer heeds;  
So some got wealth and some got name,  
Only the poor remained the same.

or

'The capitalist called him scum  
And fed him on his crumbs.  
The political leader called him king  
And robbed him of his rags.  
The poor have for ages seen  
The changing make-up of the knaves'.

(Tr. by T. N. RAJNA)

The distinction of being the innovator goes to Dinanath Nadim (b. 1916—). He brought into being the new verse. He did not modify the tradition—he departed sharply from it. In the years of the Raid, his was the trumpet voice, imparting a vigour and power to Kashmiri verse which it had not known before. Words come to Nadim, right words in the right place, unbidden, and even the old familiar words sparkle with new meanings. He was the first to naturalize new techniques



and new forms like the personal elegy and the sonnet, free verse and blank verse.

Here is an elegy by Nadim translated by T. N. RAINA.

Comrade:

My Comrade-in-arms!

Why does not our song sound in your ears?

Tired? Why lie you down when the journey's not done?

Wherefore should you slumber when our work is just begun?

Watered with your blood, won't you see the garden bloom?

Won't you wait for a new time's dawn that'll be soon?

Is it right for the architect of future to assume

Death, my comrade—

My Comrade-in-arms?

Don't I hear what you would say?

Don't I know to what you were a prey?

Chill blasts of poverty made you fade before your noon;

For medicine means money—and your sun set soon;

But even in the claws of death

You remembered the plighted troth;

To the flame of new resolves you played the happy moth;

You cannot die for you are the beacon on our path,

For ever, my Comrade—

My Comrade-in-arms!

You are no more—but what of that?

Can fire for ever slumber?

You are no more, but your fiery emanation can never die!

It'll flower into a myriad spark, and grow, but never die!

Dead coals, infected, will glow, and grow, but never die!

Coals glow into a blazing fire, and grow, but never die!  
My lyre has caught this tune, my song this stirring theme

From you, my comrade—  
My Comrade-in-arms.

Kashmiri had not known this vigour of words before Nadim.

Nadim, and soon after others, notably Rahman Rahi (Sahitya Akademi Award 1961) and Amin Kamil gave a completely new direction to poetry towards a creative use of language, precision and concreteness, attention to the verbal texture of verse and the adroit phrase, and a painstaking attempt at selecting the inevitable word to convey the felt experience. Economy of words and sudden 'juxtaposition of ideas' make for surprisingly new word-combinations, inevitably bringing with them some obscurity, particularly in a few poems of Rāhi and Kamil. These qualities of language and style are difficult to illustrate through translation: sleep overpowers chinar shades; life appears to be a blind old hag, her hair shorn of hair; the morning came like a village beau in a newly-washed, starched white robe; cold, as of a late evening, the recall of his youth by a lonely old man; the moon looked like a pancake in the sky, and so on. I should rather try to illustrate the new temper by the contrast between the earlier book of Kamil's poems, *Masmalar* (Waves of Ecstasy, 1955), with his later *Lava Ta Prava* (Dewdrops and Sunbeams), which won him the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1966. Though there is unmistakable



new idiom and imagery in the earlier verse, there is also rhetorical exhortation to peasants and labourers and an exuberant effusiveness of epithet and imagery in contrast with the restraint and concentrated effect, and a quality of consistence, so to say, of hardness as against anything florid and flabby, in the later poetry. For instance:

(a) From the earlier *Masmalar*:

Words vainly struggle to recapture  
The grace and beauty of your youth:  
The witchery of the kartik moon,  
The sharp tingle of the bracing spring breeze,  
The sprightliness of the cascade in the woods,  
The elation of a tern on a boulder in mid-stream,  
The rhythm of the swing under the willow shade,  
The freshness of the shy *virykyum*,  
The animation and the oncoming taste of spring.  
Bright as the mid-summer sun on the mid-summer  
sky;  
Startling as the sudden cry, 'Fire Ho! Fire'.  
heard in the last watch of the night;  
Awesome as the roaring hill-torrent  
one suddenly comes upon;  
Sparkling as the goblet of wine bubbling  
at the brim.  
The passion of the sunset glow,  
The pregnant hum of the summer afternoon.  
You are my youthful dream come true;  
Your youth, the passionate longing of my heart.

(b) From the later *Lava Ta Prava*:

Friends, comrades, contemporaries,  
Perhaps, you will remember and can recall  
What flowers are like.

I have forgot.  
How could one's heart remember,  
Sap dried, youth turned sere,  
Mind and memory crowding out  
What once one knew and loved?  
It is a long time since,  
I saw a spring.

It can also be illustrated by a deeply reflective recent poem of Rāhi, e.g., *Reh Ta Raqs* (The Flame and the Dance), sparse in expression, unadorned, almost bare of decorative adjectives. Life must be seen steady and whole if we may read some sense in it. Here's a fragment:

Inevitable birth, inevitable death,  
We're born to die—who consults us?  
So why complain and why waste time,  
For who is there to heed our plaint?  
The Heaven a shadow is of man  
And all his prayers here in vain.  
Houris of Paradise, nector divine,  
Merely project the wish of man.  
If in disgust you loathe to stare  
And knit you brow and shrink your heart,  
Then every flower a cobra may  
Conceal for you beneath the shade.  
Why look for meaning? There is none.  
*Why* and *wherefore*, you vainly ask.

Then cast out grief and happy be,  
And hear the swallow chirp in spring  
In summer gaze at Jassemine gay,  
In autumn hear the bulbul sing,  
In winter, look! the snow is there.  
You have no time, then why delay  
And nurse metaphysical grief?



Go out and joy in nature find:  
Cloud-horses mount the high hill-tops.

What more need I? What more need you?  
My dreams come true and here you are,  
And here your fragrant glowing locks.  
The stars this evening will shine bright  
For Love and Beauty meet tonight.

Or, Nadim's sonnet:

The moon looked like a pancake as she rose  
Behind the hills. She looked dull as a robe  
Of Pampore tweed worn off threadbare and torn  
At the collar-band out of which peep the scars  
On a marble breast, and pale as a counterfeit  
Silver coin which robs a coolie of  
Her mite. The moon looked like a pancake and  
The hills looked hungry. The clouds put out  
The fire in Western skies. But in the East  
The wood nymphs lit the moon's cooking-stove  
In whose soft glow shoots of the steaming rice  
Seemed to spring upon the hills. I whispered  
Hope to my hungry belly, and gazed and gazed,  
With hungry looks, at the moon-flooded sky.

The distinctive idiom, imagery and craftsmanship and the main trends of the day, the mental unrest and anchorless life of the time, may be discerned also in Muzaffar Azam's ghazals and Chamanlal Chaman's *nazms*, and in other poets. Some of the new ghazals have a sureness and an intellectual fibre that do not derive from the earlier poetry. This is so also with the *rubai*. Technically a 4-line independent little poem with a strict rhyme-scheme, almost always *aaba*, it needs skill to put a whole idea, mood or perception into a single quatrain, with the squib or surprise in the last line.

1. Tomorrow, I have heard it said, that Thou  
 Wouldst punish the usurer capitalist and tyrant  
 bureaucrat.  
 Meanwhile, today, the poor must suffer the agonies  
 of Hell.  
 What profiteth Thy justice of the Judgement-day?  
 (BEG ARIF)
2. To land and wealth and orchards, property;  
 To fortune, good and bad, and sorrows, joys;  
 To horses, cattle, family and friends—  
 I bow to countless gods, not One.
3. I know Thy love for me, that Thy concern  
 Would not let Thee a moment's rest nor sleep.  
 But Lucifer was in Thy confidence, not mine.  
 Why should Thou set him after me?  
 (G. R. NAZKI)

Not many translations have been made in Kashmiri verse; and even the few existing ones are not successful except, in parts, the translations of 35 select poems of Sumitranandan Pant and the first 69 Gitanjali poems of Tagore by Nadim.

I may, at the end, say a word about the poems of patriotism in Kashmiri. They concern themselves mainly with Kashmir, emphasizing our self-identity and celebrate the scenic beauties of nature, sing of the tradition of tolerance and amity and, significantly, look ahead to the future rather than to the revivalists' past. They are not mushy, nor do they strain the sentiment; and the best of them pay a glowing tribute, albeit obliquely, to the gallantry of those who guard our borders, like this one which I quote in translation:



### AT THE FRONTIER POST

This spot of earth was scorched by enemy fire  
And sprinkled with the blood of man.  
At this very spot at the frontier post,  
Far, far away from home, my comrades dug  
A hole and buried my bullet-ridden body:  
This body of mine which in its lusty youth  
Was caressed by my land of birth,  
Nourished in every fibre for months and years  
By lakes and tarns and bracing highland breeze,  
Which saw its glorious sunbirths and sunsets glow.  
Should you, perchance, come to this dreary spot,  
The shade of Shalimar chinars will welcome you,  
And you will feel rested as on the Dal Lake shore.  
The dust you tread upon will into roses bloom,  
You cannot step but on a flower-bed.

Hear, resting awhile, a thought may tease your mind:  
'War came here trailing destruction and death,  
Drenching this spot with streams of blood,  
Charging the air with powder and napalm bombs.  
How is it, then, the earth is green again,  
And there is a stir of life around?  
Birds fly up in the air,  
The breeze blows fresh and cool'.

Then standing up you cast a look around,  
A tomb obscure will greet your eye,  
And you will understand.  
This dreary spot will for ever Kashmir be.

(G. N. KHAYAL)

Gentlemen, I have done. Thank you.